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Need Seen for Firm Theological Stand in Unity Talks

(London) - Dr. Arthur Michael Ramsey, who will be enthroned June 27th as the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury, has warned that in the quest for Christian unity there is the danger of slipping into "theological woolliness".

Dr. Ramsey, presently serving as the Archbishop of York, said in the current issue of The York Quarterly that a "hang theology" spirit has too often crept into much of the discussion concerning unity.

"Now is the time for a renewed assertion of the historic Anglican appeal to scripture and antiquity in our dealings alike with Rome, with the Orthodox and with the other communions," he said. "Into every channel which the increase of charity opens up there must be brought, for the sake of all, not only a readiness to learn, but a steadfast witness to the truth as we have received it.

"To Rome we bring the claim of a Catholic antiquity, from which it is Rome who has in part deviated," he continued. "To the Orthodox we bring the appeal to patristic ecumenical faith (the faith of the early church fathers) which we strive to share with them in non-papal catholicity. To others we bring our gratitude for the open Bible and for the evangelical truths we share with them, together with our own deep conviction of what the continuity of the Catholic Church demands.

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"With the awakening of charity which marks the present hour," he concluded, "we shall join in a deeper theological seriousness in our own witness to the gospel and the Church." EPS, Geneva.

Religious Freedom Assured in Burma

(Rangoon) - Prime Minister U Nu has disclosed that Buddhism is expected to become the state religion of Burma in the near future, but that complete religious toleration of minority groups will be safeguarded.

The prime minister gave this assurance at a recent meeting here of 13 bishops of the Anglican Council of South-East Asia. Bishop Stephen F. Bayne, Jr., executive officer of the Anglican Communion, attended the meeting along with the Bishops from the dioceses of Rangoon, Singapore, Malaya, Borneo, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Korea.

Noting a feeling of uneasiness among certain sections of the population relative to religious freedom once Buddhism becomes the state religion, U Nu declared:

"It is the intention of the government to ensure that the protection now afforded by our constitution to all our religious groups will in no way be affected by the formal adoption of Buddhism as the state religion of Burma.

"Indeed," he continued, "it is our determination that the harmonious relationship existing between the Buddhists and the followers of other religions will be perpetuated for all time, and that neither persecution nor discrimination on religious grounds will ever be permitted to blacken our history.

"The progress and prosperity of the Union of Burma demands that all should work together for their common good, and this can only be achieved in an atmosphere of racial and religious tolerance and mutual respect." EPS, Geneva.

Anglicans Name Liaison for Vatican Council

(London) - Canon Bernard Clinton Pawley, the treasurer of Ely Cathedral and a Proctor in the Convocation of Canterbury, has been appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York as their personal liaison to Rome during preparations for the forthcoming Second Vatican (Ecumenical) Council.

In his new post, Canon Pawley will serve as a link between the Church of England's Council on Inter-Church Relations and the Roman Catholic Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, headed by Augustin Cardinal Bea.

Canon Pawley, one of the few clergymen in the Church of England who can speak Italian fluently, spent some time as a prisioner-of-war in Italy while serving as chaplain in the Fifth India Division of the British EighthArmy. In addition to his contacts with church leaders in Germany, Belgium and France, he is acquainted with both Roman Catholic and Protestant dignitaries in Italy.

Canon Pawley, a member of the Church Union's Faith and Unity Committee, will leave England for his first conversations with Cardinal Bea shortly after Easter. EPS, Geneva.

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Swedish and Scottish Churches To Discuss Intercommunion

(Sigtuna) - Delegates of the Church of Sweden and the Church of Scotland will meet at Sigtuna, Sweden, in early April to discuss intercommunion.

The meeting is the result of a long correspondence between the two churches which has been described as "positive". It is generally supposed that the Swedish delegation will recommend some kind of intercommunion.

Selection of the Swedish delegation has reportedly caused uneasiness in some church circles there. One source charged that all of the delegates, with one exception, are "representatives of liberal Lutheranism" and that two had undertaken the ordination of women. It said no representative of the High Church party or of "classical Lutheranism" had been chosen.

However, a spokesman for the Swedish Church said the delegation had been elected by the Conference of Bishops, and that its members were named for their knowledge and special interest in the subject.

The head of the Church of Scotland delegation will be the moderator-designate Dr. A. C. Craig. The Swedish delegation will include the Archbishop of Uppsala and the Bishops of Lund and Härnösand. Each church is expected to be represented by six or seven delegates in all.

EPS, Geneva.

Presbytery Seeks "Grass Roots" Unity Discussions

(Newark) - Efforts to begin church unity discussions at the grass roots level with three other denominations in the Newark, New Jersey, area have been endorsed by the Newark Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

The Presbytery, at a business meeting here, approved a recommendation that it invite local leaders of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ to participate in such discussions.

Dr. Charles R. Ehrhardt, moderator of the United Presbyterian Synod of New Jersey, made the proposal in the light of that made last December by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, United Presbyterian stated clerk, calling for a merger of the same denominations as a step toward the eventual union of all Christians.

Dr. Ehrhardt said the purpose of these interdenominational sessions would be for "fellowship and discussion of the whole matter of church union at the local level". He said that several presbyteries have already indicated they would present overtures to the next United Presbyterian General Assembly, requesting it to act on Dr. Blake's proposal.

The Presbytery also approved another recommendation by Dr. Ehrhardt that it reiterate its stand favouring Christian unity as "the will of God, as indicated in the high priestly prayer of Jesus". EPS, Geneva.

Macmillan Hails Bible as Priceless Heritage

(London) - Prime Minister Harold Macmillan paid tribute to the Scriptures as a priceless heritage as he joined the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, at a reception in London marking the 350th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible.

"In this age when our moral standards never seem to match our material progress," he declared, "the Bible provides something especially precious - a unique heritage, beyond all price unique, at once a consolation and an inspiration."

As he spoke inStationer'sHall where the final manuscripts of the King James Version were prepared for the printer, the prime minister said he personally favoured that version, which he termed "the greatest and most successful publishing effort of all time".

Mr. Macmillan praised the Elizabethan language of the King James Bible, and added: "This is one of the occasions where one is entitled to say the old is better. I personally like my 'old wine in old bottles' rather than in the strictly more accurate 'wineskins' of the Revised Version."

However, he noted, the New Testament portion of "The New English Bible," to be published on March 14, will embody the results of modern scholarship, and present faithfully in clear and idiomatic English the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew.

"Fond as I am of the Authorized Version," the prime minister continued, "I feel sure it is right to take a fresh look from time to time even at familiar passages in the light of the latest discoveries of modern scholarship and of the archaeologists."

A letter from Queen Elizabeth II read at the receiption noted that the translation of the Bible into English in the 17th Century "came like a broadening beam of light to our forefathers, giving them the right and the power to search out for themselves the saving truths of the Christian religion". EPS, Geneva.

US Churches Urge Better Race Relations

(Greenwich, Connecticut) - President John F. Kennedy has been called upon to issue an executive order to all Federal agencies "related in any way" with housing to make "housing equally available to all Americans regardless of race, creed or colour".

The request came in a resolution adopted at the three-day quarterly meeting of the 32-member National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church here. Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger headed the sessions of the denomination's national administrative body.

Five "guiding principles" on the Episcopal Church's stand on America's race situation were unanimously adopted at the meeting. The statement declared:

"There is a growing conviction throughout the church that (racial) distinctions have no place in the life and work of the church. Sincere and conscientious efforts are being made to realize the Christian goal of one fellowship for all.

"...The church should not only insure to members of all races full participation in worship everywhere; she should also stand for fair and full access to education, housing, social and health services, and for equal employment opportunities without compromise, self-consciousness or apologies."

Earlier, residents of the Maryland suburbs near the nation's capital were urged to prove their belief in human brotherhood by accepting racial integration of housing, schools and restaurants in their previously all-white communities.

The challenge was made by ministers of 35 suburban Protestant churches, who are members of the Suburban Ministers' Union of Upper Prince Georges County, in a statement read from their pulpits on Race Relations Sunday.

The statement confessed the sin of ommission on the part of many churchmen, and declared: "We share in the guilt of the community through our own shortcomings and our failure to waken the conscience of the community".

It noted that housing incidents, "sit-in" demonstrations and other racial problems led the ministers "to see the urgency of this problem for all citizens of Prince Georges County".

In Minneapolis, some 300 Negroes recently staged a "Fair Housing March" in support of legislation providing equal opportunities in housing accomodations. The "march" was sponsored by the Twin City Council of Clubs, a federation of 40 social, civic, business and fraternal organizations in the Negro community.

Meanwhile, evicted Negro sharecroppers in Fayette County, Tennessee, have received tons of food, clothing and soap from the Mennonite Central Committee's relief centre.

The sharecroppers reportedly were evicted because they registered and voted in the November elections. None of the Negroes have expressed any regrets about casting their ballots even at the loss of their jobs. One 60-year-old woman remarked, "I voted for the first time in my life, and it sure felt good". EPS, Geneva.

Eastern Churches Celebrate Sunday of Orthodoxy

(New York) - Prayers for the perpetuation of the Orthodox faith and on behalf of Christian unity were offered in Orthodox churches throughout the United States in observance of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, February 26.

Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America, issued a pastoral letter to all clergy in recognition of the annual event, which is traditionally celebrated on the first Sunday of the Eastern Orthodox Lent.

Stressing the need for prayer "for the stability and welfare of the Holy Churches of God and for the union of all," the statement affirmed:

"We are children of the great Church of Christ. We shall not refuse to participate in ecumenical dialogues. We shall not be guilty of exclusiveness or isolationism. We shall always be faithfull to our Orthodoxy, while being faithful to the brotherly relations which we must have with other churches. We shall follow the example of our Church of Christ who manifested the true God to all."

Archbishop Iakovos, in officiating at a Pan-Orthodox vesper service at Holy Trinity Cathedral in New York, spoke about the matter of intercommunion among Orthodox bodies.

"Nothing separates us, neither our ethnic heritage nor our various liturgical practices," he declared. "Let all the prayers be given in all languages. Let this vesper service ...be a true vesper of love and establishment of a Pan-Orthodox union." EPS, Geneva.

Southern Baptists Urged to Integrate Colleges

(Waco, Texas) - A resolution adopted by the executive board of the Waco Baptist Convention has called for desegregation of all Southern Baptist colleges in Texas.

The resolution, approved unanimously by 26 pastors and laymen attending the board meeting, called upon the Baptist General Convention of Texas to give "consideration, prayer and study to admitting all qualified students regardless of race" to denominational schools in the state.

Of the denomination's 10 undergraduate institutions in Texas, only Wayland College at Plainview admits Negroes. It has a student body of about 600.

Meanwhile, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, faculty members forwarded a resolution to the trustees of Wake Forest College calling for integration at this Southern Baptist school.

In their statement, the teachers pointed out that "modification of the custom of excluding Negroes" was urgent "so that the administration committee can act on the application of an African student".

Wake Forest students have raised funds to bring African students to the college for study.

Earlier, five white girls from Wake Forest and five Negro girls from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, an American (Northern) Baptist school, participated in a week-long "North-South Student Exchange Programme" with students of Barnard College in New York.

During their stay in New York, the 10 southern students lived together in the same dormitories, attended classes together, went to the theatre and talked endlessly about integration and other subjects. At the same time, 10 Barnard students attended classes in the South under an exchange programme initiated by the New York college's student government.
EPS, Geneva.

Two Dutch Reformed Churches Pressured To End WCC Membership

(Johannesburg) - Two churches in the Union of South Africa are being urged to end their membership in the World Council of Churches by a third church which is not a council member.

Pressure to terminate their WCC relationship is being brought to bear upon the Dutch Reformed Churches of the Transvaal and of the Cape by the Dutch Reformed Church of the Orange Free State.

The non-member church has urged the step because it considers as too "liberal" and "humanitarian" a statement on race relations issued

by a consultation of the WCC's eight member churches in the Union held last December under WCC auspices. The statement was a forthright protest against racial discrimination.

Meanwhile, the Executive Committee of the third and smallest of the three WCC-member Dutch Reformed Churches in the Union, the 182,000-member Dutch Reformed Church of Africa (Hervormde Kerk), is reading a proposal that it end its WCC membership because of the consultation statement, for consideration by its Synod meeting March 8.

The Hervormde Kerk was the only one of the eight churches participating in the December consultation which rejected the statement outright. However, representatives of the two Dutch Reformed Churches now being pressured to leave the WCC, while supporting the consultation statement, issued a supplementary statement which maintained that "a policy of differentiation can be defended from the Christian point of view...." Every article in the consultation statement had the support of at least 80 per cent of the delegates before it was included. (See EPS No. 48, 1960). Other churches participating in the consultation were the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican and Congregational. EPS, Geneva.

Swedish Bishops Petition King on Marriage Laws

(Stockholm) - The bishops of Sweden's State Lutheran Church have petitioned King Gustav Adolf to annul the law which makes it an offence for them to refuse to marry divorced persons in church.

They acted after one of their number was fined recently for "a dereliction of duty" in refusing to officiate at a second marriage for a divorced person.

At present ministers of the national church are obliged by law to marry all couples seeking a church wedding and offenders are subject to fines up to 1,000 Crowns and imprisionment up to six months.

The petition drawn up by the Swedish bishops was circulated to 2,687 incuments, of whom 1,500 signed their names in support. EPS, Geneva.

Dr. Puttfarcken Elected EKD Synod President

(Berlin) - Dr. Hans Puttfarcken of Wiesbaden, has been elected to a six-year term to succeed Dr. Constantin von Dietze of Freiburg, as president of the Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) at its meeting here.

Dr. Puttfarcken, 52, a member of the Synod of the Evangelical Church of Hesse and Nassau, is a leading official in the Ministry of Justice in Hesse. His predecessor is an economics professor and one of Germany's most prominent Protestant laymen. (See EPS No. 8). EPS, Geneva.

British Leader Scores Lack of Urgency in Work for Christian Unity

(Cambridge) - The general secretary of the British Council of Churches has taken to task both Anglican and Free Churches in Great Britian for what he terms theirlack of "a sense of urgency" in working for Christian unity.

The Rev. Kenneth Slack took the occasion of a sermon preached Sunday at Cambridge University to admonish the churches for their slowness and lack of zeal in seeking unity.

"The blunt fact of the matter is that in regard to Christian unity we will not recognize that the time of opportunity may not be with us for ever," he declared. "Our defensive motto is 'the time is not ripe'. But suppose this is not the kind of time that ripens, but rather the kind that passes, never to return. Even if we cling to the thought of the time not being ripe, what do we imagine is going to ripen time for unity?"

Mr. Slack said that Anglican churches frequently defend their position by expressing fears that "any union with non-episcopal churches may hinder eventual union with the Roman Catholic Church".

But, he declared, the question can be asked "whether the Roman Church will take the non-Roman churches seriously until their recognition of the essential unity of Christ's Church is at least strong enough to compel union between them".

The Free Churchmen, he said, are tempted to say that, with regard to union with the Church of England, the barrier is on the Anglican side. Sometimes reluctance to embark on Free Church union is justified by the fear that it would retard union with the Church of England. "But, he asked, "is it seriously maintained that it is this which causes the Free churches manfully to restrain themselves from a union among themselves on which they are otherwise ready to embark?" EPS, Geneva.

US Church Council Adopts Birth Control Statement

(Syracuse, New York) - A statement advocating birth control as a means to responsible family planning has been adopted by the general board of the National Council of Churches (USA).

At its two-day meeting here, the general board voted 83-0 in favour of the statement. However, four Orthodox representatives abstained from voting.

While several Protestant bodies have advocated the use of birth control methods in recent years, it was the first pronouncement ever made on the subject by the council, a federation of 25 major Protestant denominations and eight Orthodox communions in the United States.

Noting such restrictions in several states, the pronouncement said legal prohibitions against dissemination of birth control information violate both civil and relgious liberties of all citizens, including Protestants. It said further the United States government and voluntary agencies have a duty to assist citizens of other countries, at their own request, with measures to alleviate population pressures and to extend family planning.

In a preamble to the statement, the general board noted that any member church may dissociate itself from an action of the council.

"In the present instance," the preamble said, "many member churches have already given formal expression to the same basic convictions as is contained in this statement. But differences of conviction exist which make it necessary for representatives of the Orthodox churches to abstain from voting on this pronouncement.

"The council provides a meeting place for continuing study, in Christian freedom, of the implications of the Christian faith for responsible marriage and parenthood."

With these facts in mind, the general board declared in the statement that "Christians are agreed that the limitation of procreation may be right and proper for parents under certain conditions, but differences arise in regard to circumstances and methods.

"The Orthodox Church follows the traditional teaching which sanctions marital abstinence as the means of family planning," the statement continued. "Most of the Protestant churches hold contraception and periodic continence to be morally right when the motives are right. They believe that couples are free to use the gifts of science for conscientious family limitation, provided the means are mutually acceptable, non-injurious to health, and appropriate to the degree of effectiveness required in the specific situation."

In another session, the NCC was urged to begin consultations with representatives of conservative Protestant churches such as those affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals.

The recommendation was made by Dr. James E. Wagner, president of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and co-president of the United Church of Christ, who noted that a principle difficulty in attracting new member churches to the NCC is a "lack of knowledge of the theological position" of the council and its members and their "deep commitment" to the faith as set forth in the Bible. He also pointed out that the lack of understanding that the NCC's social concerns grow "naturally out of this faith", rather than being secular in origin, have also contributed to the problem.

Dr. Wagner said "this wrong impression" may possibly be dispelled through "a series of quite, unpublicized, prayerful consultations" with "devout and competent representatives of our avowedly more orthodox brethren."

EPS, Geneva.

In Brief

The World Council of Churches is inviting all ordained ministers under 40-years-of-age to compete in its third ecumenical prize essay contest. All entries are to be written on the theme: "What does it mean for the local congregation to say: I believe in the Holy Catholic Church?" The first prize is 1000 Swiss francs (US$230). Details concerning the contest are available at the WCC's New York office, and WCC headquarters, Geneva.

* * *

The Synod of the Methodist Church in Kenya has urged all Christians to turn out for the general elections this month when an African majority government comes to power in this British East African colony. At the same time, the Mombasa Council of Christian Congregations reminded political leaders that "a free and just society cannot be truly established by people who live in a religious and spiritual vaccum".

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A new translation of the Protestant Bible into Hungarian has been completed after 14 years of work by a special commission set up under the auspices of the Hungarian Bible Council.

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Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip will visit Pope John XXIII at the Vatican May 5. The Queen, who constitutionally is defender of the faith of the Church of England, will see the pontiff five months after the Pope received Dr. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for an informal courtesy call.

* * *

Bishop Matthew W. Clair, Jr. of St. Louis, Missouri, has been elected chairman of a special Methodist Commission to Study the Christian Faith and War in the Nuclear Age. The 12-member commission, authorized by the US denomination's 1960 General Conference, elected Bishop Clair at an organizational meeting in Chicago.

* * *

A new Roman Catholic Bible Society has been established in the Netherlands. At the same time, a new Catholic version of the Bible has been completed for circulation. In recognition of this event, the Lenten letter of the Dutch episcopate was completely devoted to encouraging Bible reading. "More than ever we need a clear vision about the meaning of life," the letter stated. "The Holy Scriptures show us the way."

* * *

Pastor Siegfried Schmutzler, 45, sentenced to five-years imprisonment in 1957 for alleged counter-revolutionary activities against East Germany, has been released from Torgau Prison under a recent amnesty provision granted to "political" prisoners by the government. His imprisonment has been strongly protested by Protestant leaders in East Germany and by many churches, student groups and other organizations throughout Western Europe.

* * *

Mennonite Brethren Church headquarters in Hillsboro, Kansas, has received word that a missionary has successfully made contact with the fierce Moro tribe in Bolivia. While missionaries have attempted to make such contacts for many years, their past efforts have failed and the Moros have killed and wounded many colonists in sporadic attacks.

* * *

The United Lutheran Church in America, the nation's largest Lutheran body, has announced plans to start work in 70 new home mission fields in the United States. The programme will seek to establish churches in communities without them, strengthen existing congregations in areas of economic transition, and provide new services to minority groups.

* * *

The Department on World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation is offering three prizes for the best manuscripts written on the subject, "An Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism for Use in Catechetical Instruction Today." The competition is open to any person or group having firsthand experience in Christian education in Africa or Asia, including nationals, missionaries and others who have worked in the field.

EPS, Geneva.